

114
8

A MODEST
APOLOGY
FOR THE
Students of Edinburgh
BURNING A
P O P E

DECEMBER 25. 1680.

Humbly Rescuing the Actors from the Imputation of
Dishloyalty and Rebellion, with which they were charged in a
LETTER, &c.

B. A.

— *Manet ali^a mente repositum*
Convictum Pape, spretiq; injuria. —

L O N D O N:

Printed for *Richard Faneway*, in *Queens-Head Alley* in
Pater-Noster-Row: 1681.

Mr. —

I Was not a little amazed when I received Intelligence by your last, of that sudden removal, not to call it Banishment, of you with other Students from *Edinburgh*; and the rather, because I understand from other hands, that what you represented to me to be only the innocent divertisement of burning a Pope, is interpreted by the Government to be no less than some formed Combination, or Plot, that may tend in its consequences to the dis settlement thereof.

You may remember, that before you went, I gave you a hint of the *Bigotry* of the *Scotch Presbyterians*, and of the high resentments they usually have of the least intrenchment on what they call their *Religion*, and of the ungovernableness of their principles, by which they think themselves obliged to promote it, and oppose what ever may be contrary to it, tho' by never so Tumultuous and Rebellious Methods. And that I gave you a friendly caution, not to concern your self in any of those kind of *Freaks*, and I hope that *Item* might have prevailed so far, as to have prevented your being engaged, at least so deeply as others, in this so ill-resented enterprize, especially at such a time when all occasions are sought for, all artifices are used (by those whose interest it is) to precipitate those who call themselves Protestants, into disloyal and mutinous Practises; and I would the rather suppose you have declined to intermeddle at this time, since what always was the true Protestant principle, is now so become their interest, that no provocation should tempt them, no specious pretext allure them to give their Adversaries so very great, as well as often sought-for advantage against them.

I doubt not but you are sensible how much the murthering the late *Archbishop* hath been improved to the disgrace of the *Presbyterians*; a fact so contrary to Pollicy, as well as Christianity, that if evident proof had not laid it upon men who went under that Character, the Argument, *cui bono,*

[4]

bono, would have unavoidably laid it at the Papists door.

The *Hamiltonian* and *Cameronian* insurrections are fresh in memory; and how the Popish party have improved them to their advantage, cannot be forgot; so that why you should enter into *Bonds* and *Covenants*, and so give jealousies to the Government at such a time as this, I cannot imagine; for believe me, it is laid to your charge, that you not only covenanted amongst your selves, but also *combined with the Apprentices*, raised Tumults, yea, continued them, and that by a violent opposition, after you were formally discharged by the Magistrates. For, I pray you, how durst you venture upon what you did in opposition to the Magistrates, unless you had the underhand assurance of some potent *Assistance*? Nay further, as if all this had been a small matter, as a note of distinction you put *Blew Ribbons in your Hats*, making that the Trumpet, as well as Colour of your Rebellion, and affronting the Nobility and Magistrates in the open Streets; yea, and as a piece of revenge, threatned to burn the Provosts House, which not long after was unfortunately done: So that some are apt to think there must be *other designs* put into your Heads than meerly burning a Pope in *Effigy*; for if that were all (though even that had been unseafonable enough) why did you *herd* together in Companies, and not rather, being satisfied with what was already done, apply your selves to your Studies? Pray let me understand from you how things are in relation to this affair: For my part, I see no such proportion betwixt the fault and the penalty, betwixt burning a Pope, and *shutting up the Colledge*, if there were no more underhand design in your enterprise than was at first pretended to

Your Loving Friend

A. B.

[5]

SIR,

Yours I received and read: I wonder not to find you take so much notice of a thing so *Childish and Trivial*, as was our late *Pagantry* in burning the *Pope, &c.* The mighty opposition it had the fortune to meet withal, is enough to make it considerable: But 'twas no small surprise to me to hear a person so discerning as your self, capable of being abused by such *sorry Artifices*, as our Adversaries have made use of to make us appear *Ghilty*. Were it not that I assure my self, that your blaming us at so great a rate, proceeded from the want of a right Information of what we have done, and what has been done against us, it might go far to lessen that high deference and value I have always had of your Judgment. I shall endeavour to disabuse you; The Interruption of my publick Studies afford me sufficient leisure: only let me premise, that I do not promise all that might be said in our excuse, nor, it may be, all that my self could say were it convenient: The thing it self speaks, where I am silent; and I know that to labour it, were to imply that 'tis not so easie to Apologize.

I doubt not, but that 'tis the Protestants *Interest* as well as *Principle*, to keep themselves within the bounds of *Allegiance*, and to be careful to do nothing which may render them suspected to the Government. And I no less believe, that no true Protestants have any other Plot in the world, but to keep in their stations, and firmly unite together, and suffer the Papists, when ever they shall be minded to make an attempt, to *split upon the Rock*. 'Tis true, the Principles of the Protestants are too full of honest simplicity, to engage them in any endeavour, to work the Papists, or any of them, to such a ferment as might precipitate them to any rash enterprize, tho' they might foresee never so much advantage thereby to themselves, or the Protestant Cause.

The Papists on the other hand, tho' they have no *Principles* that will oblige them thereunto, yet seem to apprehend it as their *Interest*, to forbear to be the first *Disturbers of the publick Peace*, if they can by any *Artifice* allure the Protestants to begin: And therefore they owning no such strait-laced Principles, no such narrow, confin'd Christianiy as that of the Protestants, are not afraid to make use of all the *Privy Frauds* imaginable, which may conduce to exasperate them to any unwarrantable undertaking.

All this, Sir, I readily grant you. And what advantage they have made this way, themselves who are best acquainted with their success, as well as conduct of their own Infernal intrigues, are most able to determine.

But this we are sure of, that the success has not been so monstrous great, as to render all other courses unnecessary. The *Real Plots* that they have cunningly made men, whose well meaning (if any

they could have) hath out-run their Prudence and Duty, to engage in, have not so much contributed to the *Grand Design*, but that there is still something left to be accomplished by *Fiditious ones*. We all know how industriously they indeavoured to affix a *Sham-Plot* upon the *Presbyterians in England*, and how little they wanted of laying the Top-stone of that contrivance : But having failed there, they, like men whom difficulties and disappointments do but animate, resolve to practise upon *Scotland*. And pursuant to this Resolution, they have there lain in wait, ready to improve every occasion that might present it self, where they might have the least *Umbrage* to affix an imputation of Sedition and Rebellion.

sir, you only take notice in your Letter of the *real Plots* that Protestants, or such as pretend to be so, have been wheaded into by the Papists, and are pleased to reckon us amongst *those Gulls*; but you seem quite to forget the *forged Plots* that they would throw upon Protestants that are altogether innocent, especially where they think they have got a *plausible pretext* for such an Imputation. Give me leave therefore to put you in mind of that part of their Diabolical design ; and to assure you that the *Colledg of Edinburgh* is now one instance of it, amongst others in the Kingdom of *Scotland*.

But before I proceed further, it will be convenient, for the prevention of being misunderstood, to tell you, That I would not in the least insinuate, that the *Magistracy* there doth concern it self to subserve so villainous an Intrigue, as that whereof I accuse the Papists. No, God forbid I should: They are persons that have given such ample, and so often repeated Testimonies of their zeal to the Protestant Religion, and of their great care for the preservation of it, that there is not the least ground for the most malicious and most disaffected person to the Government, once to suspect such a thing of them. What I say is this, That some persons there are, who beyond all peradventure, in subserviency to the forementioned devillish Resolution of the Papists, have so *misrepresented* this innocent design of ours to the Magistracy, and so fly-blown it to them, as to make it appear quite another thing than what we intended it: And then I must needs say, the Magistrates could act no otherwise than according to the Information they received. Take this *Item* along with you, that I am not vindicating Disloyalty and Rebellion, but modestly excusing persons not yet convicted, from those horrid Imputations. And I do not see, that though the Magistrates have appeared against persons, whom I endeavour to prove are innocent as to any disloyal Design, and who, I say, were aspersed as such by the *cursed malice* of others, that I must needs be thought therefore to reflect upon the Magistrates *sincerity*.

And as I would not have you think, *sir*, I design to reflect on the Magistracy; so I would not have you believe I intend to *justify* our selves, that we went on with our diversion after the Magistracy *discharged* us; much less that I concern my self to defend every particular unpremeditated *extravagance*, which the violence of an *unexpeted opposition* might draw on. Let them who are better able than I, de-

[7]

I, determine whether in the former we did well or ill; and for the latter, let it suffice, that I assure you, I verily believe, if we had met with no opposition, the whole business had been as unexceptionably managed, as 'twas innocently contrived: However, even as 'twas, I doubt not but to make it appear that 'tis great injustice to blame us, as if we did *seditionously combine together with a design to give an avowed affront to Authority, and therein lay the ground-work of a more wretched Rebellion.* When I shall come to tell you the great tenderness we used, as little as might be to intrench upon *Authority*, tho' we went on with our design; and the subtil artifices on the other hand that were used to inflame us, you will easily perceive there was not *very much* in the whole management, but what might easily have been excused and *passed by*, had it not been represented through such magnifying Glasses, as 'tis more than evident it was.

Having said thus much, to prevent the wiredrawing of any thing I shall afterwards have occasion to say, 'tis time I should go on & give you the Reasons that first prompted us to undertake what we did; and as the thing was really first motioned by some of our own number without any *farrain instigation*, so were the reasons, in a manner, *peculiar to our own Circumstances.* We considered the great Progres our Popish Adversaries made in their Conspiracies, and that their designs were by this time so far advanced, that there wanted but a little more to put a Period to our present Government as well as Religion: For let none imagine that the PLOT is altogether disbelieved in *Scotland*. We considered, that we who look upon our selves as a *Seminary of Protestants* for the service of Church and State, as Providence shall dispose of us, had not hitherto given any *Publick Testimony* of our Abhorrence of the *Romish superstition*. We considered what disadvantageous Representations might possibly have been made in foreign parts, of the byass of the Kingdom of *Scotland*; and we further considered what false measures may have been taken of us accordingly both at home and abroad, and how much the wicked Conspirators might be *encouraged* thereby to a vigorous prosecution of their Hellish designs. When we considered all these things, we thought fit at once to give an innocent proof of our own settled *aversion to Popery*, and also (as much as in us lay) to give the Lye to those misrepresentations and false measures that have been made and taken of that Kingdom. And possibly we might do our Adversaries therein a kindness too, by undecieving them, and letting them see, that when they reckoned we were all of us such blocks as were fit to take any shape they should be pleased to give us, they reckoned without their Host.

We resolved therefore to burn the Pope; and we could not imagine that our enterprize should be looked on as Seditious, much less Rebellious, because it was carried on by persons of various Interests and Inclinations, most of whose Parents are not in the least *suspected* to carry on any *design contrary to the Publick Establishment* either in Church or State. Had it been only managed by such, whose own, or whose Parents dissatisfactions with the Government, whether Ecclesiastical or Civil, might be presumed to dispose them to encrease Jealousies,

[8]

lousies, and foister Tumults and Sedition to undermine, at any rate, what they disliked, we might have suspected possibly to see it branded with the odious imputations you seem to cast upon it. We might then have thought that the disadvantageous circumstances of the undertakers would, with some shallow-headed people, have derived a Taint upon their innocent Design: But when we know that *most of us* who were concerned in it were *fully satisfied* with the establishment by Law in our respective Kingdom; and when we knew also, that some of the undertakers had such education in the *Families* of some, whose imployment in the *Affairs of State* were sufficient to free them of the least suspicion of any design against the Peace of it; when we knew all this, we could not once imagine that our enterprize should be looked upon, and prosecuted as a Crime of so horrid a Nature.

We were the rather confirmed in this belief, when we reflected upon the nature of the thing it self; for so purblind were we, that we could not foresee which way the Publick Peace should come to be concerned in it: We were satisfied that there was no such dependance between either the Civil or Ecclesiastical Government of *Scotland*, and the Church or State of *Rome*, as that an affront to the latter must needs redound upon the former. Some of us indeed could not but call to mind, that we have heard that our now Principal, once taking the Liberty in the Pulpit to mention the vulgar suspicion of the French-Kings illegitimacy, either had, or was in hazard of a severe reproof from the Magistracy for his *unseasonable boldness*; because then there was a strict Alliance between *Great Britan and France*. But we knew of no such Alliance between the Three Kingdoms and the Triple Crown, and therefore did not fear, that a grating upon the latter, should have affected the former by consent: we thought there was not such concord between them, that the *beating upon the one string* should cause the other to sound by *symphony*. And further, if the Pope might be declared against in the Pulpits, and his Usurpation abominated there without the Imputation of *an affront to any of the Nobility*, (and we have not heard that this hath, nor suspect it ever will while his Majesty lives, be proclaimed Rebellious and Seditious) we imagined that in a way suitable to our years and circumstances, we might venture a fling at him too, and—Burn him.

And we had this further encouragement to believe our selves upon secure ground, That the very same manner of expressing a detestation of Popery, by Burning the Pope, has been practised in *London*, and in other places of *England*, without any *Imputation of Disloyalty or Sedition* that ever we heard of: And we were so foolish as to think, that what was permitted in a Kingdom (I may be permitted to say it) as well Governed as that of *Scotland* (saving that 'tis not in so Military a manner, &c.) might also have been allowed here.

These, Sir, were the Reasons that we had to undertake a design of this nature; these were the Inducements that led us, or mislead us into a belief, that we should meet with no opposition in the prosecution of it, but from those of the *Popish Interest*: And we thought that if such should smell it before-hand, they would endeavour by all the *Address*
and

[9]

and *Cunning* imaginable, so to order matters, as to lay an obstruction in our way ; and therefore we thought fit to oblige those whom we acquainted with the contrivance, to secrecy. How well grounded that fear was, the sequel has instructed us.

We feared likewise, that if the Papists should come to discover it, and could not otherwise hinder us, they might attempt to do it by violence ; this suspicion was increased in us by observing the Marques of Huntly was in Town, and that unwonted numbers of Papists, *Scots* and *French* especially, dayly resorted thither ; and we knew full well that some Students, who would readily promise their concurrence upon the forementioned inducements, might as easily be prevailed with afterwards upon the prospect of any difficulties to *desert us*. For this alone Reason we proposed a Paper to be subscribed, wherein we promised our assistance one to another ; for as on the one hand we were ambitious (if no interruption at all should be given us) to engage as many Students as was possible, that the Ceremony might appear rather the unanimous acting of our whole Society, than that of some particular Students only ; so on the other hand, we were resolved, if the Papists should have attempted us, to defend our selves.

This, sir, is that *Bond* and *Covenant* which your Letter mentions : And (to deal ingenuously with you) whether our ignorance of the nicety of the Laws of *Scotland* in this particular may have ran us into an error or no, I am not able to determine. I know that Kingdom has been so often burnt in the hand with *Solemn Leagues and Covenants*, and with *Bands of Association and Mutual Defence* upon all occasions, that the Laws may possibly have arrived to such a tenderness in that point, as to make it Capital for any number of persons to subscribe a Paper, tho' it contain no more than a mutual promise to meet on such a day, at such a place, to play a *Game at Foot-ball*. If the Laws be so, I acknowledg our Ignorance ought to be no excuse. This I must needs say, if we were mistaken, the *Practice* of some of our *Predecessors* here, and of the Students of *Glasco*, and (I believe) that also of the other *Colleges* in *Scotland*, led us into the mistake ; for we have heard, that upon such occasions which the Students take to be of a general concern to them, it has been usual for them to subscribe a Paper of *mutual Assistance* ; and the outrages which have been sometimes committed in *pursuance thereof*, have never been so aggravated (that we know of) by the *subscription*, as to cause them to be looked on as other than a *Boyish Combination*. As to what concerns the present Subscription, I do confidently assure you, Sir, that my self, and all others, so far as I ever could apprehend, who subscribed, took our selves to be obliged thereby to no more than to a *mutual concurrence to the Burning of the Pope*, and to a *joynt defence of our selves against the injurious disturbance of the Papists*, if they should have offered any : And you will the easilier believe that that must have been the sense of that obligation, because at that time we could not foresee that any of us should be *called in question for it by lawful Authority*. Besides, let any considerate man think whether the sorry forfeiture of *Half a Crown* (the only penalty of that obligation) were

[10]

so great a matter as to engage any in a *Rebellion*: Can any man suppose that if we had designed any such matter, we would not have condescended upon a rounder sum? Add to all this our *peaceable demeanour*, before, in, and after the *Action*, and what greater evidence can there be of the meaning that we took our selves to be obliged in? So that tho' I do believe in my Conscience there was no one who could take it in a bad sense; yet let's suppose that some such there were, who being more Eagle-eyed than the rest, did foresee that some were like to be called in *Question*, and had a mind to lay the foundations of their security, by obliging all to a *mutual adherence* to one another *against Authority*, if such a thing should happen; yet I am sure they were *disappointed* of their end, if such they had; for to my knowldg there was none of them that ever attempted any thing agreeable hereunto, either by force to prevent the *apprehension* of their Companions, (tho' there were none of us who did not privately resent the rushing in of Soldiers into the Colledge, and the breaking open our Chambers at midnight) or to *Rescue* them after they were apprehended, or to defend the *Statue* till it should be consumed, or any other thing which might look like a forcible opposing Authority, otherwise than as I shall impartially tell you in the progres of my Story; and how far that was such a *violent opposition to Authority*, as you are pleased to accuse us of, leave you to determine.

In the same Paper, to prevent all misconstruction, we took care expressly to declare that the *reasons* of our Undertaking was *not to put an affront upon any person whatsoever* other then the *Pope*, and that that was the only end of it. For 'twas here only that we could possibly imagine the Shoo would pinch, and therefore took what care we could to inlarge it in the Instep. And this is that I presume which you intend by the *unseasonableness* you charge us with.

However, our busines was not so closely carried but that it got wind, and coming to the Lord *Provost's* ear, was quickly carried to the *D. and L. Chancellor*. Both of them are greatly enraged thereat, and theratning to *cut down the Attempters*, &c. they resolve by all means to prevent it; and in order hereunto the *Town-Mayor* is sent to the Principal of the Colledeg on *Thursday* at *Midnight* to cause him to interpose: the Principal accordingly, the next day came into the Schools, and offered a *contrary Bond* to be Subscribed by the Students, which was generally refused by all, unless some of the first year.

The next night the *Town-Mayor* being sent again, apprehended two *English Gentlemen*, and some others who were supposed to be the *principal Actors*. These they carry to the *Town-Guards*, where they were examined by the *Town-Council* there met on purpose, and then delivered to the *Gray-Coats*, and by them under pretence of speaking with the General, conveyed with Matches burning, &c. to the *Cannon-gate Toll-booth*, and there received and Imprisoned by a Company of *Red-Coats*. And hereby being put out of the *Jurisdiction* of the *Provost*, there was no redress to be expected but from the *Privy-Council*.

[11]

The next thing to prevent the design, was a Proclamation prohibiting all Merchants and Tradesmen to suffer their Apprentices or Servants to go abroad on *Christmas-day*.

And lastly, for the grand reserve, when the day came, the Provost contrary to the Priviledges of the City, suffered all the Forces that were in the Suburbs or parts adjacent, to March in, and Post themselves in the most convenient places for preventing our design. Gen. *Dalziel*, with the Livetenant and a Squadron of his Majesties Horse Guard, and other Companies on Foot, goes to secure the Grass-Market, as being the place of ordinary Execution. *E of Marr* with Two Companies Marches towards the *Parliament-Close* to guard the Cross. And there indeed, as being the Gentile place of Execution, we designed to effectuate our purpose. The Kings Life-Guards seeing no appearance of ought in the *Grass-Market*, March up the *Castle hill*, fearing ('tis like) we would chuse the properst place, and burn the grand Saucerer where the little inferior ones usually were. The City-Militia are ranked in the middle of the *High-Street* to defend it. Another Company of Foot sent to double the ordinary Guards at the *Holyrude-house* for the security of the Duke's Person.

By all this Martial preparation against us, all this noise of Drums, Kettle-Drums and Trumpets, all this appearance of Colours flying, drawn Swords, Matches burning, &c. wherewith at this time the whole City was full, you will think, Sir, you had reason to charge us as you did with a *formed Combination against the Government*. Sure you cannot now imagine but that we were ingaged in a Rebellion no less formidable than that of *Ireland*. All this dust could not be raised for nothing: It may be so. But you question me, *How durst we venture our selves against such Puissance, unless we relied upon some potent assistance?* Believe me, Sir, we intended sport, and not to fight; and therefore had the courage to begin our March, not only without knowing of any *Auxiliaries*, but also without being provided of any *Arms* our selves. 'Tis true, our numbers increased by an unsought for *Accession* of a great many Tradesmen and Apprentices still as we marched along, who it seems were as eager for the pastime, and as ready to expose Popery as our selves: Yet I protest to you, that we thought our selves enow to rout all the Forces we came to fight, and to storm all the Castles we came to besiege, without the assistance of any; and therefore we never had any former correspondence, much les *combination* with these Volunteers. No, we never in the least acquainted nor desired the concurrence of any but those of our own Society.

We thus attended the Statue in its *Pontificalibus* down the *High-School Wind*, and up *Black-Fryers Wind* to the *High-Street*. You will admire how we got any place free almost to perform the execution in: yet we did; but seeing the armed opposition that was drawing on all sides, and being careful of keeping the peace, without further Ceremony, than the reading of a short Accusation, we set it on fire with a couple of Flambeaus: at the sight whereof *Pereat Papa*, being loudly resounded, made it seems a terrible reverberation in some ears. *L. L.* being nearest, was soonest alarmed, and having been many years in the King.

Kings service, and (as they say) never drawn his Sword in anger before, now draws it in defence of the Pope ; some who were nearest, rudely demanded *Hansel*, &c. But this was not all, for making a furious pass at one of the *unarmed* Actors, he lost his footing, and unluckily fell prostrate before the Statue. Some informed his Lordship that it was a mistakēn Devotion, for the *Timber-Popes had no Toes*. So that arising, he commanded his Souldiers, who were but just now come up, not being able altogether to keep pace with his Lordships *Zeal*, to extinguish the Flames. And we who resolved to make no other opposition than by *stronging* together to hinder any access to the Statue till it were thorowly kindled ; after we had *crowded a little while*, departed, and left it to the discretion of its defenders. By this time it was all on flames, for we stuffed it well within with Rosin, Pitch, Gunpowder, and such like combustible stuff, *designedly*, that our stay about it, after 'twas on fire might be the less. So that you cannot but observe Sir, that however blameable we might be in burning it after the Publick Authority had appeared against us, yet we used all imaginable care that it should be done in a manner as *little offensive* as might be. After our departure the Souldiers did what they could to put an end to the burning. I doubt not but you would have smil'd to have seen what *cruel Drubs* the merciful Souldiers gave his Holiness with the Buts of their Musquets; though the choice were hard, yet it was their kindness, rather to knock him o'th head, than see him die before their eyes, the unhallowed *death of a Heretick*. Yet could not all their care rescue him from the deplorable Fate; for being informed of the Gunpowder, they thought it their wisdom to retire, lest by being too *nearly concerned* for the Popes safety, they might hazard their own. And 'twas well they did so in so seasonable a time; for immediately the flames reached the Powder ; and the Pope expired in a—— Stink.

But we have not done with him : A more *Canonical Adventure* yet remains : The little boyes of the Town, such as you would have suspected by their *magnitude* were scarce yet so well lettered as to spell *Po-pe-ry*; they take courage and resolve to do something: and finding the Relicts of the shattered head which the violence of the Powder had severed from the body, tye a string to it, and drag it up the Street to the *castle-bill*. The Kings Forces too missing so principal a part, and storming to quit a prize so considerable to such *Diminutive enemies*, like men of *courage* who scorn to be easily baffled, Troop about, and put on *brave resolutions*, rather to dye like men upon the place, than not recover what they had lost. Believe me, there was *no great need* of such superlative Valour, for the little *Mirmidons* had no stomach (I assure you) to fight so redoubted an enemy, if they could avoid it, and therefore retreat as orderly as they came: but their stratagem proved unsuccesful, for can we doubt but they had one? They had to do with *old Souldiers* who understood Martial Discipline too well to *untwist* while their enemies were in a capacity of rallying, and who therefore make an eager pursuit in *Battalia*; and falling in upon a small party that was to justifie the Retreat, they discomfit them,

and

[13]

and pressing hard upon the main body of the *Mirmidons*, you may think for a while there was a sharp rancounter! The *Mirmidons*, I assure you, shewed as much manhood as their enemies; but alas! being inferior, tho' only in point of discipline, after a tough resistance they were forced to fly; but the rout was not so total, but that a party of them came off intire with *half* of the booty, which they secured in a Well, and after when the field was clear, took up and delivered to the publick Executioner *to do his office upon*. The other half of the Booty fell into the enemies hands. I think after some strugling to whom it should belong, one of the *Trumpeters* got it——!

But enough of this. Sir, I am afraid you will scarce believe but that in telling so *ridiculous a busness*, I impose upon you. I must confess I should not have had the faith to have believed it my self, unless I had such grounds for it as I think could not easily prove false. But 'tis time to return.

All this while those Students who were apprehended on *Friday* night or *Saturday* morning, continued in prison. On *Sunday* night the Kings Advocate, Sir *George Makenzy*, ordered thereunto by the Council, examines the two *English* Gentlemen, Whether they were not *instigated* by Letter from the Lord *Grey*? They denied it. Then he asked, Whether they had any Letter of instigation from any body else? They answered, None. He proceeds, and, if they will not confess, threatens them with the Boot; an *Engine* which I who have been born in a Freer Air, may have leave without reflection to call *slavishly barbarous*. But at length finding them resolved to adhere to their answers, and that he could not by any means extort any thing from them which could be so much as a *probable ground* of pinning the Contrivance upon the Lord *Grey*, &c. he was content to take bond of 1100. Marks a-piece for further appearance at the Councils pleasure, and to dismiss them.

On *Monday* at night the Kings Advocate examined the rest of the Prisoners, and threatned them with the Boot if they would not confess *who writ the bond*. One of them confessed *he writ a paper which the rest subscribed, but denied it to be a bond*. Then they were interrogated, Whether they *designed an affront upon any of the Nobility*? They answered; *That to prevent that very misconstruction, they had declared the contrary in that paper*. Then the Advocate desired him who had owned the Writing, to swear *as to that clause of it wherein they protest against any intention to affront, &c.* whether any instigated him to put it in or no? He being conscious to himself, that no body had instigated him to any part thereof, and not being *aware* of the *snare*, took the Oath as the Advocate had tendred it. Then they were examined, *Whether there had been any of the Whig-Ministers or Citizens at any of their Consultations?* And the Advocate finding by the resoluteness of their denial, there had been none, was content to discharge them upon bond for further appearance, as before.

Now might we have applied our selves to our studies, and all things been quieted, had not some of the Soldiers (to what ends, themselves best know) given us an occasion (I do not say a reason) to herd together again, by assaulting and cutting one of the Students quite through the skull, before the very gate of the Colledg, and that without the least provocation; and not only so, but by great indignities offered to others of us in other places of the Town. It seems it was a pity that things should be so soon composed. Something further was yet to be done, to drive us on to a greater extremity! They that knew the humour of young Students, how unwilling they are to put up affronts either from Townsmen or Soldiers, and how apt they are to herd together in such cases, and joyn in their mutual defence, could not be far to seek for a way to push them forward to things not otherwise excusable than by the heat of young blood, and the inexcusableness of the provocations.

For my own part, when I consider how frequent it has been for the Students in Edinburgh, and in other places of Scotland, upon less provocations to commit far greater outrages, I cannot but think that our Extravagancies at this time (tho' I am far from vindicating them) were extraordinary moderate. The truth is, we so far considered how much we were concerned at such a time as this to avoid any thing that might have a mutinous aspect, that I am confident we would have put up all those indignities that were offer'd us, had not another thing which intervened, given us a much more sensible touch. 'Twas this :

A little after the first disorders were over, the Principal and Regents go to the Palace with a design to have made an apology to his R. Highness; but being denied admittance (for the paroxism of indignation was not yet over) they return. But they go again, and are admitted. We were apprehensive that they had in our names, without acquainting us, made a submission, and begged pardon for burning the Pope. These thoughts, I confess, galled us; and therefore to shew how much we continued in the same mind, we unanimously got blew Ribbons in our hats with this Motto, NO POPE; and went in a body (or herd if you will) by the Provost's house (which 'tis like was taken for an affront to him): When we were come into the High Street, we cryed, No Pope, No Pope. What persons they were who might take themselves further to be affronted by this, I do not know; or if any met with any real affronts, they may partly thank themselves. Sir, Lads are Lads, and will act as such; and though we nor can nor will upon a deliberate reflection on all that passed, justifie our selves in those particulars wherein through the heat of a youthful frolic, we exceeded the just bounds of moderation; yet this we must have leave to say, for we cannot but think it, That those persons who pretend to exceed us as much in discretion and prudence, as they do in years, and yet could not forbear as unjustifiable provocations and returns on the other hand, have either forfeited that advantage of discretion they pretended to above us, or given us too great cause to suspect they had a malicious design of increasing the Mutiny. I could give you instances even in this kind. We know

[15]

know who they were that threatned *to tread under his feet those who durst wear a blem Ribbon before him.* And who they were that cuffed and beat one of us (by what authority himself knows) for indiscreetly saying, *That all this stir was for burning the Pope.* Persons from whom (of all others) such words and such actions were little expected. I could tell you more. But my busness is not to particularize other mens Extravagancies, but, so far as 'twill bear, modestly to apologize for our own.

Sir, I do assure you this assuming to our selves Ribbons, is a thing that is done amongst us every year, as a badge whereby we may be distinguished from others, and known to our selves: for you must know, we wear not Gowns and Caps as they do in the *English* Universities. 'Tis true, we never wore such distinguishing Ribbons at this time of the year; nor ever Ribbons with Motto's before. But what of all that? 'Tis no consequence that we must needs therefore be said to combine together (as ou are pleased to suppose) to the dis settlement of the Government; or that we design'd to make a party, and invite others thereunto to raise and carry on a Rebellion; And *that this shoud be the Trumpet as well as Colour of it.* No; had this been our design, What should have induced us exprely to refuse to permit the Apprentices to wear the same kind of Ribbon, when they applied themselves to us to that end? Or if other Gentlemen besides our selves (or the Apprentices afterwards) did think fit to wear Ribbons of that colour, what was that to us, who could not hinder them? When you may see by this instance of the Apprentices, that we were so far from desiring any to wear the Ribbon but our selves, that we did what we could to hinder others?

However, when we saw by the imprisonment of the Printer who had done no more than barely printed *No Pope* upon our Ribbons, and by other assurances, how disgustful this was like to prove to the Magistrates, we all pulled them from our hats. And if some one or two imprudent Students did afterwards resume them, I may, Sir, expect it from your justice, that you will not blame the whole Society upon that account.

And I hope to find the same Justice when I tell you, That some rash inconsiderate Lad might perhaps in passion say, that *the Provost deserve'd to have his house burnt.* Tho' such words were not only without the knowledg and approbation of the rest, but even condemned by the speaker upon a sober reflection; who I am perswaded might say them without any premeditated design. You know 'tis usual for one man in anger to tell another, *He deserves to be hanged, or he will be hanged,* without ever intending to prove the Executioner. 'Tis true, if the party should be afterwards found hanged in good earnest, and no account given how it happened, there might be some reason to suspect the Threatner.

Sir,

[16]

Sir, the House was burnt, and burnt designedly, there is no question: but how, or by whom, I am not able positively to inform you. I am sure when I heard it, I was in a strange surprise, knowing that it would not be easie for us to decline the odium; and therefore tho' I was conscious of my own innocency in particular, and believed as much of all the rest; yet for my farther satisfaction I was curious to go immediately to the *most daring and undertaking* among us, and such whom I assured my self must have been concerned, if any were. But I pumped in vain; for I found them all in a surprise equal to my own, and as much detesting such a Villany. And I have reason to believe, that had they known any such thing, they durst have confid'd in my secrerie, tho' possibly had it been so, their confidence would have proved false bottom'd. And I am the rather inclined to pronounce them innocent, because I found them all able, by a succession of witnesscs, as it happened, to prove where they had been all that time. And tho' diligent inquiry has been made at *Dyddiston, Libberton*, and other places adjoining to *Priest field*; yet I hear not of any one of our number that was seen any time that day or night thereabouts.

And I could further confirm our innocency by the late report we heard, that one of these poor Boys hath been since booted: And tho' it might have been expected that the extremity of that horrible Torture might have made him accuse himself or others of things that never entred into his or their thoughts; yet 'tis said he asserted their innocency with admirable courage; and being taken out, bid the standers-by consider how great that innocency must needs be, when it had enabled him to undergo those torments which he doubted not would have forced confessions of the greatest of Villanies from the stoutest of themselves! But I shall rather supersede this Argument, than once believe men could have acted so great cruelty upon children.

Sir, that I may be plain with you, there wants not ground to believe, That some persons might think if they could cunningly and secretly fire the house of *Priest-field*, it would be an easie matter to raise a belief that it was done by us. They knew that the circumstances of the foregoing disorders, especially the words which they knew they could prove some of us in passion had spoken, would be evidence sufficient to suspect, if not convict us of the fact, unless we could with equal probability lay it some where else; and that they hoped might be prevented by a secret management on their side. But whether or no they have thus managed it with a cunning and secrerie equal to the contrivance, possibly we may know more hereafter. At present, we know thus much, that there was a Gunpowder Barrel with the Castle stamp upon't, found the next day in that part of the Park that is nearest to *Priestfield*. And as I am informed, some asking the Governour of the Castle, *To whom, and when he had delivered any Barrels of Gunpowder?* received this answer, *That of late he had not delivered any, but one to the Halyrund-house, to furnish the Gaurds withall.* But having this last parti-

particular only by flying report, I will not be positive in it: But be that as it will, I see not how we can once imagine how any of the Students should come by a Barrel so marked, for that such a Barrel was found is most certain: I think none will say they either stormed the Castle, or plundered the *Halvynnd-house* for it. Besides, you cannot but have heard of the attempt that was made to fire a House in *Edenburgh*, 'tis like if the Incendiary had not been taken and discovered to be one of the Marquess of *Huntlies* men, we might have been charged with that too; and you have heard of the apprehensions the Citizens at present have, that that wicked design of burning their City is not yet lade aside. And the World knows that *London* was burnt——and by whom.

I will not urge your Argument of *Cui bono*: If it be of any force, let it prevail only so far, as to make you believe us innocent, till you hear we are proved guilty. And let not a perfunctory reading of the late Proclamation in *Scotland* against us, cause you to mistake it so far, as to imagine we are directly charged therein of this horrid Fact, much less already proved guilty of it; for tho' it be something perplexed, yet upon due examination you will find, that 'tis only positive, that there is *convincing proof that the House of Priest field was burnt down by throwing in Fireballs*.

I deny not that we were accused as guilty before the Council, and (as 'tis like) that all the probable circumstances were with the utmost industry *aggravated* in the Information, we may believe that nothing which the utmost malice of our Adversaries could suggest was omitted, because of the measures that the Council thereupon took: It was no small thing which induced them to summon before them those who had given bond for their appearance, and upon their appearance to Imprison them again, and then to shut up the Gates of the Schools of the Colledge: And in the next place, by the Proclamation, to command all and every of the Students within twenty four hours to depart Fifteen Miles at least from *Edenburgh*.

'Tis (as I am informed) our Principal offered that those who should be found guilty of these disorders, might bear the punishment themselves; and thought it hard, that all should be involved in a general ruine, before it appeared how many were guilty: And knew not whether it was regular first to punish them, and then examine whether they deserved it——And how this examination could be taken in their absence——much less, whether a submission by proxy would be admitted:—And desired his Advocates might be heard argue it, whether it were so agreeable to Law, that a Colledge established by Parliament, without Act of Parliament should be dissolved?

Sir, there is one thing more I must not forget to tell you; 'tis, that tho' the Proclamation take care, that such whose Parents or Tutors

will give caution for their good behaviour might abide behind ; yet matters were so ordered, that tho' the English Gentlemen offered such caution, yet the Clerks of the Council delayed first, and at last, after they had been consulting at the *Halrynd-house*, positively refused to accept it ; and so the time allowed being near an end, and they fearing to be trapanned, were in all hast necessitated to go out of *Edenburgh* on foot, and take post at the next Stage.

Thus, Sir, I have given you an impartial account of the whole procedure, so far as I am able ; and tho' I do not pretend that what I have said will vindicate us in every particular ; yet this I may say without any imputation of Impudence, that upon the whole matter, 'tis evident our crimes are not near so odious as you have been made to believe. I may say it, had there been no opposition, nothing, either in the contrivance or management of the whole Action, could have been justly lyable to blame. 'Tis true, we have been indiscreet, rash, have acted like our selves, in that when we heard of opposition we desisted not. I am heartily sorry we went on, when we see, that what we were a going about, *for the manner of it*, was disgusted by the Magistrates. But that we designed a Rebellion, were abetted by others thereunto, endeavoured to make a party to carry it on, to the dis settlement of the Government, or that we did so much as avow affronts to the Magistracy, is wickedly false. Even those extravagancies which we did commit, may most of them be accounted for, by the unexpectedness of the opposition we met withal, and the great provocations we thought we received from particular persons. And 'tis no mean Argument that we are not so really guilty as your Letter would make us, if it be soberly considered that such trivial, boyish freaks, were improved with such a mighty pother to make us appear so. Who can imagine but that there have been exceeding false Glasses used, when our *Childish dissrtisements* have been represented to the Magistrates as *formidable Combinations* against the State ? What a Mountain hath been made of our Molehill ! Thus can men make every Stake in a Hedge, when they have a mind to pull it up, a Publick Nusance ! Thus can wicked men who have an itch to be combating, make Images of Straw appear real enemies ! Thus can they contrive to dissolve Seminaries of Learning, when according to the old method, they are ushering in Devotion by Ignorance ! Good God ! what terrible *Batteries* may we not expect, when such extraordinary diligence is used already to force earth for the *Mounts* ?

Well, God bless His Majesty say I, and let him live to disappoint the Malice and Hopes of his greatest Enemies ; for we may possibly have such a Successour, who is resolved to look upon peoples professing their detestation of Popery to be a *crime equal to Rebellion* : And every publick owning of the *Protestant Religion*, to be an intollerable affront to his Person.

Sir,

[19]

Sir, 'tis time I conclude; If I have been already too tedious, you will ascribe it to the zeal I have at once to satisfie your commands, and to wash of those black and horrid imputations which your Letter involves me and others in. I should be sorry that your self, or any other considerate person should take *me* to be guilty of that *Bigotry* you speak of, much more sorry to see you continue to think me capable of thoughts of Rebellion: You know how much I have always, since I understood the difference of any thing, detested those both Principles and Practises. I am intirely of your mind, that Protestants cannot more prejudice themselves, and the interest of their Religion, then by endeavouring to promote it by undue courses, or to defend and secure it by associations not warranted by Law. If by all I have said, I have been able to rescue my Loyalty from that taint it may have received in your opinion, upon the account of my being in some measure concerned in what you so highly decry; 'twill be the greatest satisfaction imaginable to

February
168^r

SIR,

The deuontest of your Servante

N. M.

F I N I S.
